

THE COURIER

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DR. NATHANIEL T. TRUE

By William B. Lapham

[Editor's Note: This sketch of Dr. True was read by Dr. Lapham before the Maine Historical Society, 17 March 1892]

Dr. Nathaniel Tuckerman True was born in that part of old North Yarmouth, which is now part of the town of Pownal, March 15, 1812. He was a lineal descendant of the Henry True, who was at Salem, Mass. in 1644; [he] married a daughter of John Pike and settled at Salisbury. Dr. True's ancestors include some of the most distinguished Puritan families in New England, such as Wheelwright, Pike, Bradbury and Stevens. His great grandfather, Jonathan True, was one of the early settlers in North Yarmouth, and the second settler in that part of the old town which was first set off as Freeport and subsequently as Pownal. The grandfather of Dr. True, also Jonathan, was born in North Yarmouth, April 30, 1758, and left nine children, one of whom John True, born August 7, 1785, married November 30, 1810, Mary, daughter of Abijah Hatch. These latter were the parents of the subject of this notice. The Trues of North Yarmouth were substantial citizens, noted for strength of mind and character, noted also for industry and worldly thrift. Dr. True was inured to labor upon his father's farm in Pownal, attending the brief terms of the town school, which were all the educational facilities the town afforded. He early developed a love for books, and while at home with his father, all his spare funds were devoted to the increase of his

library, and much of his spare time to the study of his literary treasures. He was also a close student of nature, and every natural object, whether animate or inanimate, had in him a close observer and intelligent investigator.

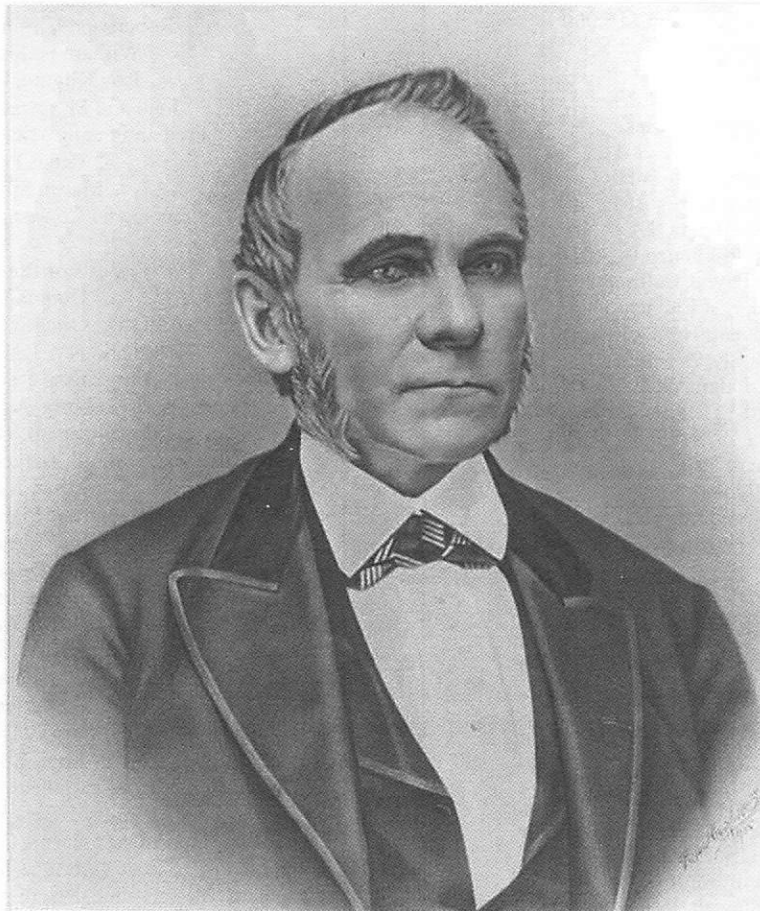
Not until he was twenty years of age, did Dr. True decide upon pursuing a collegiate course of study. He then became a student of Dr. Joseph Sherman, then principal of North Yarmouth Academy, and in two years entered the freshman class at Bowdoin College. Pecuniary reasons, and the fact

that he was becoming of that age when it was important for him to enter upon a profession, induced him to leave college at the end of two years. This in after years was a source of great regret, and was, without doubt, the great mistake of his life. Deciding upon the medical profession, not because he thought it most congenial to his tastes, but because it would better enable him to pursue the collateral studies of botany, chemistry, mineralogy, geology and natural history, of all which he was passionately fond, than any of the learned professions. While pursuing his medical studies, he engaged more or less in teaching, in order to provide himself with means, and met with marked success.

In 1835, he opened a high school at Bethel Hill, and was there two terms in each

year, until he received his degree of doctor of medicine from the Maine Medical School in 1840, when he practiced for a short time in Durham. But he soon found the practice of medicine to be widely different from its study, and that while he had a fondness for the one, he had neither the taste nor aptitude for the other. So after two or three years in general

(continued on page 4)



Dr. Nathaniel Tuckerman True (1812-1887)



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Included in this issue is a listing and grateful acknowledgment of our Annual Fund donors for 2002. This year's total contribution was the largest ever in Society history. I would like to add my thanks to those of the Annual Fund Committee. The extra gifts each year to the Annual Fund help to keep the Society strong as we build for the future. Your participation is most welcome and greatly appreciated.

Arlan R. Jodrey

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Help keep the Society strong by making a gift to its Annual Fund Campaign. Tax deductible contributions help support its exhibits, special events, publications, and other programming. Gifts in any amount may be made throughout the year to the Society at P.O. Box 12, Bethel, ME 04217-0012.

Editor's Corner

With this issue, we complete all of 2002 and now we look forward to producing the spring 2003 issue which should emerge in May. Our new expedited production system allows us with the invaluable assistance of Jack Nordahl, who does our layout, scans the photographs and graphics, and "fine tunes" everything, to transfer it electronically to our printer in Berlin, NH. From there it is printed as sent, so we avoid all the production costs except for paper and printing. Smith and Town Printers delivers once a week to Bethel, thus we are saved delivery charges. From there our faithful volunteers spend a day assembling and taping; then another group of dedicated "mailers" manage the fine art of labelling and sorting over 1450 copies of *The Courier* so that they reach destinations in over forty states, several Canadian provinces plus the United Kingdom and Germany. Many thanks to everyone who helps in the process of producing and keeping *The Courier* coming to everyone in the Bethel Historical Society "family."

SRH

(Dr. Nathaniel T. True, continued from page 1)

practice of a profession in which he soon found he lacked the essential elements of success, he laid aside his drugs and his instruments, and adopted teaching as his life pursuit. Gould's Academy situated at Bethel Hill where he had successfully taught a number of terms of high school, was established and put in operation, while Dr. True was engaged in the study of medicine and in practice, and when he decided to abandon the medical profession, he engaged with the trustees of Monmouth Academy to take charge of that institution, and remained in charge, meeting with marked success for several years. But the trustees of Gould's Academy and the people of Bethel Hill kept in remembrance the success that Dr. True as a high school teacher, and as soon as an opportunity was afforded they invited him to take charge of their academy—a position which he readily accepted, for he had become greatly attached to the people and the place. It was in 1847 that Dr. True returned to Bethel, intending to make the place his future home. The academy enjoyed its greatest success in the years immediately following the return of Dr. True. The building was literally packed with pupils during the spring and fall terms, while many pursued their studies at their rooms, and only came into the academy long enough to recite.

Dr. True remained in charge of Gould's Academy until the trustees decided that new methods should be introduced and an infusion of younger blood, to put them into operation. After this, he opened the Highland School for boys which continued for four years, and then, while his family continued to reside at Bethel, Dr. True had a professorship in a normal school in western New York, and also taught terms of school at Gorham and Milan in New Hampshire. He was the editor of *The Bethel Courier*, the only newspaper ever published in Bethel, for about two years, and it was in the columns of this paper that appeared his chapters on the early history of Bethel. He served on the school board of Bethel for several years, and one year as supervisor of schools for Oxford county. At the death of Dr. Ezekiel Holmes in 1865, Dr. True was invited to take charge of the agricultural department of that paper, which he accepted and successfully filled for four years. He was also an efficient member of the Maine Board of Agriculture. He wrote much upon the subject of agriculture and horticulture, and was the founder of, and the leading spirit, in the Bethel Farmer's Club. He was a constant contributor to the columns of the *Oxford Democrat*, *Portland Transcript* and *Lewiston Journal*, and wrote upon a great variety of topics.

Dr. True instructed his students at Bethel not only in theory but in practice, and it was his delight to take his spring and summer classes in botany through the fields, pastures and woods, gathering and classifying the various wild flowers in their season, or his pupils interested in mineralogy and geology to the summit of Paradise Hill, and sometimes even to the tops of surrounding mountains, where he pointed out and described diluvial markings and other signs of glacial action, and gathered minerals of various kinds. His influence was felt throughout the town and county, and was elevating in its effects more especially upon the public schools.

Dr. True's studies embraced a very wide range, and he was able to impart instruction in almost every department of useful knowledge. They embraced languages, both ancient, including Latin, Greek and Hebrew, and modern including

French, Spanish, Italian and German, the natural sciences, practical surveying and engineering, scientific agriculture, navigation, astronomy, and the higher mathematics. If he failed in anything, it was in his effort to cover too much ground, so to speak, for no man can hope to be proficient in everything, and the usual result where a person tries to be proficient in everything is that he will be profound in nothing. Dr. True was interested in historical and antiquarian research which induced him to seek membership in the Maine Historical Society. Though not a resident of Bethel until his mature manhood, he soon became and continued to be until his death, the historical man of the town. At the time of the centennial celebration, he was selected as the historian of the occasion, and later at the centennial of the Indian raid into Bethel, he was called upon to act in the same capacity.

Dr. True was a ready and fluent speaker, and when instructing his classes or lecturing before larger audiences upon geology and kindred subjects, he always addressed his hearers in a familiar and off-hand manner, making himself easily understood. He was [an] authority upon the botany, mineralogy and geology of northern Oxford County, and also upon the history, language and customs of the Abnaki Indians. He was enthusiastic in the schoolroom, and had the happy faculty of inspiring his pupils with the same spirit. Among his pupils were the ablest men and women that ever went from Bethel, and not a few of them have achieved national reputations. His school was well-patronized by the people of Portland, and several of the members of this Society, who have been under the instruction of Dr. True, can testify to his efficiency as a teacher. His last active work in 1883 was a resumption of his old employment at Litchfield Academy. There he was stricken with paralysis from which he never recovered, and returning to Bethel, he lingered for a year and more, gradually becoming more feeble in mind and body until he passed away. Dr. True received the honorary degree of master of arts from Waterville College [now Colby] in 1812, and the same from Bowdoin in 1868. He had been president of the Maine Board of Education, corresponding member of the Portland Society of Natural History, of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and of the Wisconsin Historical Society. Save his magazine and newspaper articles, none of the writings of Dr. True were ever published. He left more or less manuscript, but none of it in form to be printed. His papers upon the language of the Abnaki Indians were disposed of by the family for a small sum and carried to Massachusetts. Dr. True was a professor of religion, and the time of his death, one of the deacons of the first Congregational church in Bethel.

Dr. True was married August 9, 1836 to Ruth Ann, daughter of Aaron and Rebecca (Marston) Winslow of Westbrook. By this marriage, he had five children, three of whom died young. The surviving daughter, Mary Hatch True, has achieved a wide reputation as a teacher of deaf mutes.

For [his] second wife, Dr. True married September 19, 1849, Susanna Webber, daughter of Eben and Mary (Barnard) Stevens of Sweden, Maine. By this marriage, there are two daughters and one son, all of whom with their mother survive. The son, John Preston True, a young man of great promise, fills an important position in the publishing house of Houghton, Mifflin and Company of Boston.

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A record \$20,100 was raised from 386 donors during 2002. The Annual Fund Committee, John Head, chair, Dorothy Bartlett, Arlan Jodrey, Alden Kennett, and Danna Nickerson wishes to thank everyone listed below for their generosity: Roger C. Adams, Simsbury, CT, in honor of Kate Adams; Portia M. Albee, Alameda, CA, in memory of Harriet Albee; Earl Anderson, Gorham, NH; William and Deborah Anderson, Newry; Roland E. Annis, Jr., Bethel in memory of Louise Annis; Jean C. Anton, Greenwood, in memory of Stephanie; Roberta Arbree, Randolph, NH; Mary Ann Ashcraft, Westminster, MD; Jim and Linda Auman, Warren, NJ; Nancy Babcock, Newry; Romeo and Jo Baker, Newry; Daniel Barnes, Gorham, NH, in memory of Bud and Jean; James L. and Eliza H. Barnes, West Bethel; Al and Lee Barth, Bethel; Dorothy Bartlett, Bethel, in memory of Urban and Lillian Bartlett; Elizabeth Bartlett, Fresno, CA, in memory of Albert B. Bartlett; Sue Bartlett, Bethel, in memory of Billy Stowell; U. C. Bartlett, Bethel; Mary Beth Bayerlein, Bethel, in memory of John P. Bayerlein; Elmer and Arlene Bean, Bethel, in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Bean, Sr.; Evelyn T. Bean, Bryant Pond; Penelope Beckman, Litchfield, CT, in memory of Marjorie MacArthur Noll; Carla Brown Beddo, Vacaville, CA, in memory of Barbara Eva Brown Barone; Anne Benedict and Skip Freeman, Boston, MA; Bessie Bennett, Bethel, in memory of Lester Bennett; Randall H. Bennett, Bethel; Hi and Mary Lou Berry, Newry, in memory of Judy Freeman, Helen E. Berry, and Eva T. Chapman; The Bethel Citizen, Bethel; Bethel Furniture Stock, Bethel; Bethel Rotary Club, Bethel; Fred and Marion (Farwell) Bither, Falmouth; Robert Blake, Bethel; Gwyneth and Ken Bohr, Bethel; Garret and Melody Bonnema, Bethel; Ann Borreson, Sparta, WI, in honor of the Daniel Beckler family; Florine E. Bowden, Albany Township; Keith and Bonita Bowden, Melrose, MA; Colleen F. Boyd, West Bethel, in memory of Mrs. Albert Bennett; Charles and Bessie Brooks, Riverside, CA; Don and Eleanor Brooks, Bethel; Doris M. Brown, Bethel; Leland Brown, Bethel, in memory of Barbara D. Brown; Musa S. Brown, Bethel, in memory of Edwin L. Brown; Wendy Brown, Philadelphia, PA, in memory of G. Warren and Charlotte Brown; Albert and Norma Buck, Oxford, in memory of Nancy J. Buck; Gurdon S. Buck, Watertown, MA, in memory of Carl Tucker; Edward V. Bush, Bourne, MA, in memory of Catherine Lyon Bush; Mary S. Calderwood, Mesa, AZ, in memory of Donald W. Calderwood; Catherine Canavan, Cool, CA; Wendy and Dennis Carey, Atlanta, GA; Thomas R. Carter, Bethel; Stanford E. Carver, Wappingers Falls, NY; Doug and Anne Chandler, Tempe, AZ; Roberta M. Chandler, Lovell, in honor of Stanley Howe and Randy Bennett; Stephen and Lynda Chandler, Brunswick; Jim and Lou Etta Christiansen, Mexico; Donald M. Christie, M.D., Gray; Dorothy Christie, Gray, in memory of Donald M. Christie, Sr.; Mrs. Gordon Clifford, Farmington, in memory of Gordon Clifford; Norman and Sylvia Clanton, Bethel; Adaline S. Clough, Bethel; Mary L.S. Clyne, Mohawk, NY; Nancie Coan, Washington, DC, in honor of Beckie Bailey; Howard and Virginia Cole, Bethel; Eleanor Collins, Buffalo, MO, in memory of F. Harvey Bennett; Eva and Rupert Conroy, Auburn, in memory of Sylvia and Dellison Conroy; Victor L. Coolidge, Bethel; William and Meg Cousins, Bethel; Allen

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(2002 Annual Fund Donors, continued from page 5)

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Notes Regarding Bethel, Maine
by William A. Valentine
(continued from the last issue)

Stories of Grandfather Goddard
Edward Goddard, 1815-1876



I think he was one of a large family though I do not personally know but three of them. He had a sister, who I think married a Swan, and a brother Elijah, who was an undertaker in Bethel and lived to be about ninety years old.

Grandfather was an expert millwright and had an extra good set of tools for those times.

He was an ardent supporter of government and when the Civil War broke out he volunteered although it meant leaving a more or less invalid wife with no means of support except what her sixteen year old daughter, my Mother, could earn teaching school and the highest pay she ever received was \$2.75 per week and board.

When grandfather went to enlist they asked his age and he replied he was forty-five once but neglected to state it was two years before.

They accepted him and he became a corporal.

At the time of the retreat from Winchester he was sick and unable to keep up with the troops and was taken prisoner and sent to Belle Isle prison on an island in the James River at Richmond, Virginia. He was nearly starved to death there and I suppose it was during that time that his hair turned white as the picture Mother used to have of him showed a white haired man looking something like the picture of Mr. Maxfield.

On one occasion a Confederate soldier came into the prison area with a ham. In company with other prisoners, grandfather stepped up and asked for a piece. The soldier replied, "Boys, it wouldn't go half way around but I will give the old man a piece."

During grandfather's imprisonment, Grandmother Goddard dreamed she saw her husband and he said, "Betsey, I am dead; they starved me to death." Mother had about the same dream, but did not dare to tell her Mother that she had had it. Finally Mother saw some notice in the newspapers asking for those who had some friends in the Rebel prisons to send them the information and they would try to get them exchanged.

Mother wrote and enclosed a stamped envelope for a reply and was very disappointed that she did not get a reply but finally knew that her letter had started forces moving that resulted in grandfather's release.

Grandmother Goddard died in 1867 and some time later Grandfather married Mary Ann Chapman, the widow of Horace Chapman, a son of Deacon Edmond Chapman. By this marriage, he had Nellie Grace Goddard, who was about a year younger than I and lived to be about nineteen or twenty years old.

Grandfather had a daughter Liliass who was about ten years old at the time of his second marriage and the stepmother was so ugly to Lily that grandfather left her and spent his last days at the home of Father and Mother.

During the last summer he was alive he was sick in bed in the room that was afterward used as a parlor and I remember the white haired old man taking a spoon and getting out a little piece of meat and giving it to me.

Mother has since told me they asked Grandfather what he

did it for and he replied, "The child will remember it as long as he lives," and I have done so although I was only about 2 ½ years old at the time.

Grandfather got out and tried to work again and I think was working on one of the mills at Walkers Mills.

Riding up from there to Bethel one day he felt so bad that he stopped on the way to ask for something to take. When he got to Bethel, he engaged some one to drive him out to the farm.

While they were harnessing the horse he said he would step across to the post office and get the mail. Coming down the steps he slipped or fell and struck his head against a hitching post. In my younger days, I always heard the fall broke his neck, but years after Mother was told that his neck was not broken but anyway he was picked up dead.

When things were settled up Mother demanded and got his chest of tools and we had them until the old home burned.

When Mother and the other daughters were children she said they asked their parents how they proposed and they always brushed aside the question but after grandfather's death Mother found the written answer of her mother to her father carefully treasured in grandfather's pocket book.

Mother once said that my habit of using a story to illustrate a point I wished to make was something I inherited from Grandfather Goddard.

When Grandfather married his second wife, she owned the old sawmill and grist mill and grandfather repaired the saw mill and put it in working order, but after his death the half grown sons of the widow did not take care of it and it fell into ruin.

Once I asked Grandmother Valentine something about Grandfather Goddard and she said he was a very pleasant genial man.

I suppose grandfather's people must have been in poor circumstances for he was bound out to someone to work his keep a the age of eight years and was expected to saw and split all the firewood for the family.

I don't know how much they used a year, but it took twenty cords to keep our old home going and that would be a tremendous amount to expect an eight boy to work up. It used to take Father most of the winter to do it with some help from Charles and I.



Ferryman Isaac ("Ike") Easter stands on the Rumford Point Ferry as it crosses the Androscoggin from Rumford Point to the Rumford Corner side of the river in the 1940s. The ferry was discontinued in the mid-1950s with the completion of the John Martin Bridge.

**IN HIS HOME:
MEMORIES OF DR. N. T. TRUE**
by Marian True Gehring

Many appreciative words have kept my father's memory green, coming from many sources, and gratefully received by his own, from north, south, east and west, and countries even beyond the sea.

There would seem little more to say, were it not that nothing has ever been given to the public of his characteristics, as expressed in his home life.

My father was wholly domestic in his taste. He required no separate study, no family tip-toeing by a sacred door, or the turning of night into day in order to accomplish any literary work upon which he might be engaged. The very center of the family life was his chosen workshop, and newspaper and magazine articles, and some of his most carefully constructed lectures, were written with the whole large family of children around him. Among my earliest recollections is the long table ready for the evening of study. Mother (with the inevitable work-basket) was there, too, for father's first question upon entering the house was always for her. I remember hearing halting translations of Virgil helped through by fatherly bridging of gaps, ending with the characteristic, "Yes, well,"—that his pupils yet remember. At that time, being, then, the petted youngest, it was my delight to comb and arrange his hair with a doll's comb and brush, a process always extremely soothing to his tired nerves. The audacity of parting his hair in the middle making beaucatchers at the sides, and even decorating the dignified head with a bonnet, was kindly tolerated by the father whose lightest word of authority I never dreamed of questioning. There were marvels in those days! Sometimes the tiny comb drew from the thick locks the little old-time silver three cent piece, which great event was hailed with shrieks of childish delight at the absolute blankness of comprehension on his part, that he could be suspected of any complicity with such a miracle.

We feared our father—but were not afraid of him. There was enough of the Puritan in our early training to make obedience not so much exacted as expected, and the father's rarely expressed commands were most faithfully respected and executed by the mother. We felt his power, for it meant the best things of which we knew; and there was ever the touch of mercy upon justice. If, for instance, there was a complete surrender to uncontrollable mirth among the childish ranks drawn up in the solemnity of family prayers, at the comet-like apparition streaming through the rooms of the long-suffering cat, hotly pursued by the most mischievous of puppies, the offence received no comment; he allowed the breach of decorum to act as its own punishment. Or, if childish fun grew too uproarious, whilst he was writing in our midst, his murmured repetition of the word his pen was following, would often be the only sign that he was being disturbed. But if an altercation arose, and especially if any word of detraction was spoken, the absent-mindedness vanished, and the never-failing rebuke, "Let me hear no more like that," was sure to hush us into silent abasement.

Perhaps nothing could give the keynote of his influence in

the home so much as this resolute determination never to allow petty criticisms, detractions or envious remarks to pass unchecked. His was the most magnanimous nature I have ever known. If, however, he became convinced of the unworthiness of a character under discussion, he was sternly capable of condemning wrong doing, although even then we children were never allowed to roll the faults of others "like sweet morsels under the tongue." He had a deep though often silent contempt for all littleness of the soul, and I never heard him say one envious or pessimistic word through all his hard and harassed years. The good fortune of others was always met by the warmest spirit of congratulation, and he had the rare gift of intuitively finding out the finest qualities in people and then gladly revealing them to others. The word "noble" has become forever ennobled to my thought by his generous applications of it to people.

His moral courage was magnificent. If circumstances failed him the *next* thing was taken up with a fine strength of bearing, the remembrance of which will forever remain as "part of my life's unalterable good." I so well remember the sweet curves of those strong lips and the steady light in the responsive eyes when he would rise from some disappointing experience or anxiety and seek some kind of action—not his preference—but the nearest seen duty.

We knew, though never directly from him, that there was always a great hunger in his life which a nearness to great libraries and more frequent contact with men of learning would have satisfied; for while kindness itself to an inferior and cordially appreciative of his equals, he passionately loved whoever was regarded by him as his superior.

There was positive elation in his manner when receiving a visit from an old college class-mate, or from a professor in some branch in which he was interested (and let those who knew him best state if there was any subject worth knowing about in which he was not interested), or when by chance a foreign traveler was interviewed, to whom he often gave as much by the suggestions contained in his questions, as was received.

A new study was always an epoch. I can see him pacing the long walk under his trees, book in hand, sometimes catching me as I sped by, and stopping to impart something of his keen enjoyment to even the limited comprehension of a child. I learned much from him that did not cost actual study, although he was quite capable of keeping me for days upon the first few lines of Virgil, causing me to feel for the rest of my life the most profound respect for the degree of absolute accuracy expected from the student of the classics. A walk or drive with him meant a lesson in botany, or geology, or mineralogy. The stone in the wall, the lichen on the stone, the boulder on the hill-side, the trend of the mountain chain, the glacier's path, the old river bed—all told him volumes, which he retold to the child at his side; and many grateful souls will bear witness to the beginning of a new life of thought and reverent interest in this world of ours from the touch of inspiration given them through his magnetic dealings with these subjects as they "talked by the wayside."

He gave us children a haunting sense of the value of time and opportunity, and the absolute obligation we were under

as to self-improvement and the acquisition of knowledge.

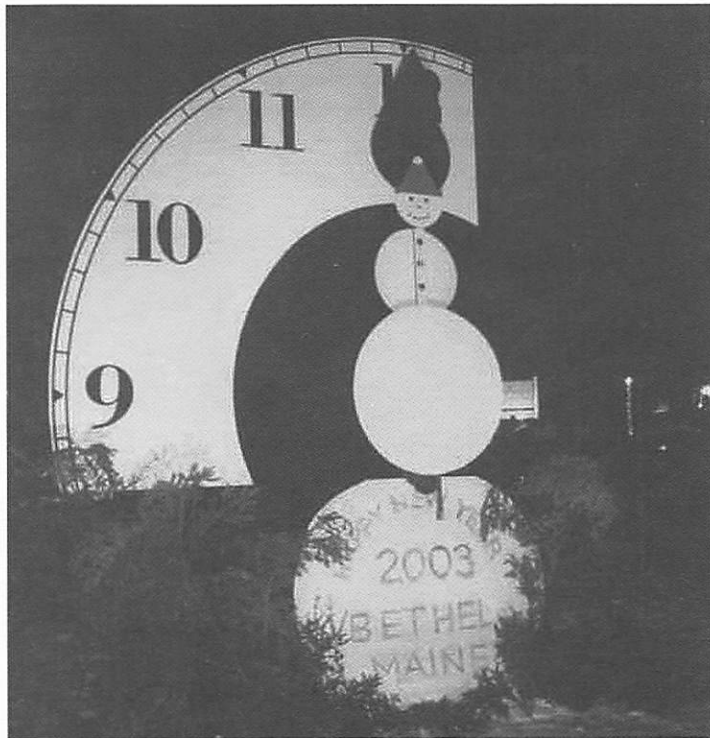
Poverty of *means* we were early taught to face with dignity and self-respect, but that poverty of *mind*, through neglected opportunities, was a disgrace. The question was never raised at our home, "What is a man worth?" but invariably, "What are his principles, and his standard of education.?"

During the later years we often heard him repeating the poem, "My mind to me a kingdom is," with reverent earnestness. He was always learning, always enriching his "kingdom."

When the shadow of fatal illness fell, he rallied himself with the last effort of that heroic will, to battle against the encroachments of disease upon his mental strength, by testing himself with daily readings from Homer in the original and in writing short articles for publication. Ere long, however, the self-imposed task was quietly abandoned, and who can tell the inner struggle with which he laid it down!

After this, there arises before me the pathetic picture of his figure in the wheelchair, his little, worn pocket Bible in his hand, as he comforted himself, in his helplessness, with words that had been the sources of his manhood's strength, and often in the twilight softly sang, "Gently lead, o gently lead us."

Then the shadows deepened into the darkness that obscured his powers of expression, and months of heavy mourning lay upon us, not to be lifted till the morning of his emancipation dawned when, through tears, we could rejoice in the glorious freedom of a soul like his, "born to soar," mounting "from form to form," up through the boundless, limitless Universe.



The special clock set up on the Bethel Common and designed and constructed by Jim Sysko and others for the Society's 5th annual New Year's Bethel festivities featured a snowman that dropped down at the stroke of midnight.



MEMBER PROFILE Blake MacKay

Blake MacKay was born in Drew Plantation, a "suburb" of Wytopitlock, Maine. He attended school during his early years in a one room school house and graduated with a class of six from Wytopitlock High School in 1942. After working on the farm and in the woods, he entered the U.S. Army in 1945 and served with the Infantry and then the Air Corps in the Philippines and Guam. Following his time in the service, he entered Franklin Technical Institute in Boston for a two year course in electrical construction, graduating in 1951. He came to Bethel in 1947 to drive taxi and assist with the bowling alley for his sister and her husband, Kay and Rodney Eames. Next door to the bowling alley lived Rachel Brown, whom he married in 1952 and they have four children and eight grandchildren. In 1948 he worked for Bethel electrician Robert Kirk. He later was employed by D. Grover Brooks in the store and as an electrician. In 1953, he worked at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard as a first class electrician. He returned to Bethel in 1954 and for the next dozen years, he was a self-employed electrician. In 1966, he began work for the State of Maine, as the first electrical and later the first chief electrical inspector for the State before his retirement in 1995. During this period, he recalls testifying as an expert witness in arson investigations in many courtrooms throughout the state.

He served as a selectman of Bethel from 1961-63 and is currently the electrical inspector for the Town. He was a corporator of the Bethel Savings Bank, and is a Mason, Shriner, and member of the American Legion.

A life member of the Society with his wife Rachel, he has been a longtime member of the Building Committee. He has also worked extensively with electrician John Greenleaf on the wiring at the Robinson House and with the electrical system at the Dr. Moses Mason House.

His hobbies include gardening and helping his family and others with electrical challenges.

Diary of William S. Hastings (continued from the last issue)



August 12, Clear, hot. Working for Leslie. 4 of us ran cement floor in a 12 X 32 henhouse. Floor 2" + thick. Also ran wall under the sills. 15 ½ bags cement, 6 ½ hrs. August 13, Cloudy, showers. I set transit on lot line in Farwell's pasture & did some triangulation work for my map. Greenwood in p.m. August 14, Clear, cool. Worked on Bob's pipe line an hour. Took his car to garage. Haircut. Surveyed 3 hrs. for Miss Plaisted. Finished job & she paid \$4.75. Meserve paid 50 [cents]. August 15, Clear, warm. Back went all to pieces in morning. Norway to have it fixed! The darned thing went right out again. August 16, Clear. I'm in a lot of pain. Saw Swett again. He worked on me for 50 min. but couldn't get the last bone in place. Crew threshing. August 17, Cloudy. I'm sitting up. Some pain. Ona Yates [Ruth's cousin from Norway] is here. I'm typing field notes & making plan of lots. August 18, Clear & warm. Saw Swett again. Got back into place at last. But I'm no good to work. Dave Hoyt is here for the night. August 19, Cloudy & Hot! Dressed poultry & got oats. I drove the trucks. Big job for a grown man! 5 ½ loads oats. August 20, Cloudy. Rain. Grover & Alice invited us out to Songo Pond at Winslow's camp. Nice time. August 21, Cloudy. Norway again. Back is bad. August 22, Cloudy & showers. I wired pump for Bob. Nominating committee meeting. August 23, Clear & hot. Dad & I started the spring house. Walls up & boarded & end rafters on. Currier's called on us. August 24, Clear & hot. Roof on (boards) and cover made for spring. Foot valve & strainer on. Farwell's truck ran out of road & smashed on a tree. August 25, Cloudy. Norway for treatment. P.M. started a plan of E. Bethel Cemetery, 3 ½ hrs. F. & Game meeting in eve. August 26, Clear & warm. [Fred] Haines barn & ell burned. House badly damaged. \$2000 ins. They will collect \$1900. August 27, Clear, hot. Ruth's folks up here. Bob finished his pipe line. Works fine. I surveyed a small piece for Geo. Cole at Greenwood City. August 28, Clear & cool. Norway for treatment. Got strip shingles for spring house. Repairs for mower. August 29 [no entry], August 30, Clear, hot. Shingled spring house roof. Crew is threshing. Finished our oats. August 31, Clear, warm. Hanging finish on spring house. September 1, Clear, warm. Surveyed line between A.M. Bean place & Dutton place. September 2, Cloudy. Set stone post on Bean-Irvine line. Worked on Leslie's new henhouse in p.m. ½ day. Papers signed on Dutton place. Sold to Mrs. Maude Irvine, \$700.22. September 3, Cloudy. England declared war on Germany over invasion of Poland. September 4, Cloudy. Wired all day for John [Howe]. September 5, Cloudy, Rain! Finished surveyed for Frank [Bean]. \$9 paid. Wet thru. Dad [George] Cole had a slight "stroke." Confined to his bed. September 6, Clear & cool. Making window for Leslie. Ran left hand into planer. Took ring finger off at middle joint. Little finger is badly stove up. September 7, Clear, cold. I'm in pain all the time. September 8, Ditto yesterday. [Dr.] Widd [Twaddle] dressed my hand. Thinks he has saved my little finger. September 9, Cloudy, cool. Hand is a little easier. Norway for back treatment. Called at Greenwood. September 10, Cloudy. Fryeburg for cranberries. I didn't pick any. Ruth got 16 or 17 qts. I visited with Hugh's family. August 11, Cloudy, cool. Hand dressed in a.m. I'm home in p.m. Ruth & Dad gone blueberrying on Buck's land. August 12, Clear & cool. Adrian Grover & myself, fence viewers, divided a line fence for Leslie Kimball & Mrs. Emery, Albany. 131 ½ rods. \$3 &

\$1.50/mileage = \$4.50. September 13, Clear & warm. Hiked in a.m. Made out fence viewers notices in p.m. September 14, Clear & warm. Found Jersey heifer on Swift Place with a bull calf. Herded 'em into Coburn Pasture. Carried Deborah Farwell to Rumford in p.m. Saw Beau Geste [movie]. September 15, Cloudy, hot. Norway for treatment. Ruth & I called at Greenwood. George is a little better I think. Our crew is picking Farwell's corn. We hired a French boy, Alphonse?. September 16, Clear & HOT! I'm indoors. Hand & back are bad. Crew cutting ensilage. September 17, Cloudy, windy. COLD. Hand dressed. It is coming better. Greenwood in p.m. September 18, Clear, cool. Got grain & shavings. Made finish & window frame in p.m. September 19, Heavy frost. Cutting in our ensilage. Nice day. I have a "blind spell." Sick all night. September 20, Cloudy, cool. Clapboarded the spring house. Rodney [Howe] is sick with the flu. Barbara sick all night. September 21, Clear, cool. Went to Gore to survey for Beck. The changed their minds. Wired 1 hr. for Haines. Widd came to see Barbara & dressed my hand. September 22, Clear & cool. Went to Norway to see Swett. Barb is better. September 23, Cloudy, cool. I built hen roosts in Coburn place. After 2:30 p.m. I ran about 80 rods of line between Bean Swamp & [Elmer] Trask. Fingers dressed at night. September 24, Standard Time. Clear, cool. School reunion. Ruth went to Greenwood. I'm sick at home. September 25, Cloudy, rain. Started digging spuds. 76 bbl. Fingers dressed. Cold "shot." September 26, Cloudy, rain, cold! Dug 62 bbl. Rain drove us off. Disconnected water pipes on chick range. Ruth is sick. September 27, Cloudy, rain in p.m. Dug 67 bbl. Housed farm machinery. September 28, Clear, warm. Dug 156 bbl. My back is badly "out." September 29, Cloudy, rain. Norway for treatment. September 30, Cloudy, rain. I'm stiff as a board. Built window frames & hen roosts for Leslie. Thunder storm at night.

(to be continued in the next issue)



Ruth C. Hastings (1901-1981), William S. Hastings (1901-1943), May F. Hastings (1877-1926) (mother of WSH and RDH), Joe Small holding his child, and Robert D. Hastings (1899-1992) in front of the Hastings family homestead in East Bethel in the 1920s. Photo courtesy of Barbara Hastings Honkala.

From William B. Lapham's "Oxford County" (1880)

On Bethel he wrote "a first town meeting was held at the house of Gen. Amos Hastings, Aug. 15, 1796. The first religious society was organized the same year. In 1799, Rev. Daniel Gould was settled as pastor. Dr. John Brickett of Haverhill came to Bethel in 1796, and was the first physician. He remained but a short time, and returned to Haverhill. Dr. Timothy Carter came in 1799, and practiced in town 46 years.

Dr. Carter was the father of Cullen Carter, once a member of congress from New York. William Frye, grandson of Joseph of Fryeburg, was the first lawyer in Bethel, he came in 1823, married here, and reared a large family."

New Life Members

Burton and Jane deFrees, Rumford
Blaine D. Moores, Acton

Book Note

A Distant War Comes Home: Maine in the Civil War Era. Edited by Donald W. Beattie, Rodney M. Cole, Charles G. Waugh. (Camden, ME: Down East Books, 1996. Pp. 280. Paper. \$14.95.)

The editors of this very useful book have collected nearly fifty essays, first-hand accounts, and memoirs of Maine people or by Mainers, which provide numerous insights into how the people of the Pine Tree State influenced the course of the war or were affected by the conflict. Some of the leading figures in Maine during the era such as Joshua Chamberlain and Hannibal Hamlin are included along with the less well-known names as Sumner H. Needham and Danville Leadbetter. Each chapter in this volume is also followed by bibliographic citations for further reading.

To order, please see page 12.

BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE

The Bethel Historical Society is committed to building on its reputation as a premier regional history center that will continue to enrich the educational and cultural life of its community for generations to come. Members and friends have generously contributed to the operations of the Society and to the acquisition of the Robinson House. In order to ensure the long-term maintenance and further development of the Center's facilities, programs, and collections, the Society is seeking new forms of support. You, readers of *The Courier*, are asked to consider making a charitable gift to the Society through a bequest in your will, the establishment of a trust, or a number of other financial arrangements and options that are available. These charitable gifts can be structured to support the Society's mission while at the same time assuring the security of your family. For more information, please contact the Society by calling (207) 824-2908 or (800) 824-2910 or by writing to P.O. Box 12, Bethel, ME 04217 or by an e-mail: info@bethelhistorical.org

BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY *Membership Application*

Membership in the Society entitles you to:

- Free admission to the period house museum.
- A 10% discount on purchases of \$10 or more from the Society's Museum Shop
- Special Research Library privileges, including reduced photocopying fees
- Subscription to the Society's quarterly, *The Courier*
- Preferred rate for exhibit hall/meeting room rental
- Voting rights in the Society
- Reduced course fees
- Special invitations to Society events

Note: New memberships activated after July 1 include that calendar year, plus the following year.

_____ Student (under 18 years) - \$3
_____ Senior (over 55 years) - \$5
_____ Sustaining (individual) - \$10
_____ Contributing - \$20
_____ Patron - \$30
_____ Benefactor - \$40

_____ Life over 55 years (individual) - \$100
_____ Life over 55 years (couple) - \$150
_____ Life 55 and under (individual) - \$200
_____ Life 55 and under (couple) - \$250
_____ Individual preference (any amount over \$10)
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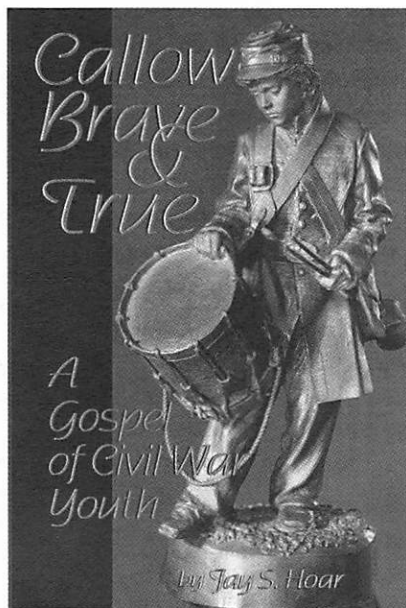
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